

Message Text

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13

ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2104

INFO AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

COMIDEASTFOR

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PFOR, IR, UR

SUBJECT: INCREASED SOVIET INFLUENCE IN PERSIAN GULF DENIED

REF: TEHRAN 2450

SUMMARY: PROMINENT IRANIAN SENATOR WHO IS CLOSE TO THE SHAH
REJECTS SUGGESTION OF AMERICAN COLUMNIST THAT SOVIET INFLUENCE
IS INCREASING IN PERSIAN GULF. SENATOR ADDS THAT REMOVAL OF
AMERICAN " BASE" ON BAHRAIN WOULD DEPRIVE SOVIETS OF ANY EX-
CUSE TO MAINTAIN A BASE IN THE GULF. END SUMMARY.

1. TEHRAN JOURNAL FOR APRIL 28 CARRIES PROMINENT FRONT- PAGE
INTERVIEW WITH SENATE VICE PRESIDENT AND PUBLISHER ABBAS
MASSOUDI REJECTING AS GROUNDLESS A RECENT JOSEPH ALSOP COLUMN
IN WHICH ALSOP CLAIMED THAT AMERICAN AND JAPANESE INTERESTS
IN THE PERSIAN GULF WERE BEING ENDANGERED BY AN INCREASE OF SOVIET
INFLUENCE THERE. MASSOUDI, WHO IS CLOSE TO SHAH AND WHO RE-
CENTLY RETURNED FROM A 22- DAY VISIT TO THE GULF, SAID THE FACT
IS THAT THE LITTORAL STATES, INCLUDING IRAN, HAD TAKEN ALL
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MEASURES TO PREVENT UNWARRANTED INFLUENCE OF ANY FOREIGN POWERS
IN THE GULF.

2. REFERRING TO ALSOP' S STATEMENT ABOUT A SOVIET BASE AT UMM QASR IN IRAQ, MASSOUDI DENIED THAT THIS WOULD HAVE ANY EFFECT ON REGIONAL SECURITY. MASSOUDI THEN REMINDED ALSOP THAT IF THE AMERICANS WOULD CLOSE DOWN THEIR BASE (SIC) ON BAHRAIN, THE LAST EXCUSE WOULD HAVE BEEN REMOVED FOR THE SOVIET UNION OR ANY OTHER COUNTRY TO MAINTAIN A BASE IN THE GULF.

3. COMMENT: MASSOUDI ARTICLE IS ANOTHER REMINDER OF IRANIAN CONCERN TO ASSERT AND MAINTAIN ITS PARAMOUNT POSITION IN THE PERSIAN GULF. ASSERTION THAT AN AMERICAN PULLOUT FROM THE GULF WOULD REMOVE ANY EXCUSE FOR PRESENCE OF OTHER OUTSIDE POWERS IS REPETITION OF A THEMEFIRST SHOUNDED BY MASSOUDI IN 1971. FACT IS THAT ON BALANCE IRANIANS SEE AMERICAN NAVAL PRESENCE IN GULF AS A NET ADVANTAGE BECAUSE IT SYMBOLIZES COMMITMENT OF AMERICAN POWER IN AREA. BUT NEGATIVE ASPECT IS THAT IT DE-TRACTS FROM IRANIAN INSISTENCE THAT GULF SECURITY SHOULD BE SOLE RESPONSIBILITY OF LITTORAL STATES.
HELMS

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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